

Virginia, because three of our state's children. Brian, Shawn and Sarah Keane, had the honor of introducing President Clinton the day the bonuses were announced. The 3 Keane children along with 208 more West Virginia foster children moved in with their adoptive families in 1998.

Our State is working hard to increase public awareness of adoption and children needing homes. A quarterly newsletter, "Open Your Heart, Open Your Home" features stories of waiting children and successful adoptive families. In May, Dave Thomas came to West Virginia for the third annual Foster and Adoptive Parent Recognition Day, to recognize adoptive parents who provide homes for children with special needs.

We have been able to make this progress largely as a result of the efforts of the individuals who were honored by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption, and other dedicated and hard-working West Virginians like them. Let me tell you a little about these "angels".

Larry and Jane Leech have been foster parents for many years, opening their home and their hearts to children in need of both. Working with the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, the Leeches adopted a sibling group of three young boys, twins age 4 and an older brother, age 6, in 1998. Now, a year later, the Leeches are again in the final stages of adopting another sibling group—this time, three older girls. Mr. and Mrs. Leech also have three biological children. They have a tremendous amount of love and a strong commitment to all nine of their children. Recently, the Leeches and their children visited the West Virginia Governor's mansion where they were honored by First Lady Hovah Underwood, for their commitment to children in need.

Judge Gary Johnson believes that all children in the foster care system deserve permanent homes. As the 28th Judicial circuit judge, elected in 1992, Judge Johnson has worked closely with the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources. He meets with them quarterly to review problems or identify issues that prevent children in West Virginia from achieving permanence in their lives. Judge Johnson continually increases his own knowledge of the issues by attending conferences on child welfare.

The progress we have made since the passage of the 1997 Adoption Act is significant. Certainly the 211 West Virginia children who found families last year, including the six children who now call Larry and Jane Leech "Mom" and "Dad" know that. But over 400 West Virginia children are still waiting and hoping to be adopted—over 100,000 children in our nation are still waiting and hoping to be adopted. Too many of these children are growing up in the insecurity of foster care. Too many of them are becoming teenagers without a permanent family.

And that is why we need "National Adoption Month". We need opportunities to honor the angels in adoption like the Leeches and Judge Johnson. And we need the opportunity to publicly re-new our commitment to ensuring that all children have the opportunity for permanent adoptive homes.

I am pleased to join the other members of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption in honoring more than 50 "Angels of Adoption" from around the country. I am doubly pleased that 3 of these angels are from West Virginia. And I pledge to continue to work on legislation that will help all of West Virginia's, and America's foster children have the opportunity that the Leech children now have, the chance to grow up in a permanent, loving family.

I urge my colleagues to dedicate themselves to this effort as well.●

JEWISH HISTORY IN GREECE

● Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, in recent years there has been renewed interest in the early history of the Jewish community in Greece. The Hellenic and Jewish peoples have had a long and constructive relationship, and that interaction has been one of the foundations of Western civilization.

An important part of this historical movement is the renewed research on historic Jewish sites in Greece. There is now an active and impressive Jewish museum in Athens which has served as a focal point for this activity. These efforts have spawned a number of individuals to do their own family and group research; and I am pleased to report that one of my constituents, Dr. Judith Mazza, has written an excellent account of her visit to Greece entitled, "First-time Traveler's Impressions of Jewish Sites in Greece," which was published in the spring 1999 issue of *Kol haKEHILA*. Dr. Mazza is descended from a Romaniote Jewish family from Greece, and her article depicts succinctly the rich and enduring Jewish cultural and religious legacy in Greece. I recommend it to all those interested in the history of the Jewish people and ask that the article be inserted at this point in the RECORD.

The article follows:

[From *Kol haKEHILA*, Spring 1999]

A FIRST-TIME TRAVELER'S IMPRESSIONS OF
JEWISH SITES IN GREECE

(By Dr. Judith Mazza)

I first saw mention of the Jewish Museum of Greece, located in Athens, about twenty years ago. Curious about my family history, I joined the Museum as an "American Friend." Upon joining, I received a letter from the founder (now Director Emeritus) of the museum, Nicholas Stavroulakis, concerning my family name (Mazza, Matsas, Matza, etc). I learned from that letter that my family most probably was a Romaniote family rather than a Sephardi family. I then understood why my father's family never spoke Ladino (judaeo-espanol). My father, born in the United States, spoke Greek at home, as did his parents (who emigrated to the United States in the early 1900s from Ionnina and Corfu).

My husband and I were curious to visit Jewish sites in Greece. My interest had been stimulated by the book *Jewish Sites and Synagogues of Greece* (Athens, 1992) by Stavroulakis and Timothy DeVinney. Prior to reading this book, I knew little about the communities that had existed in Greece prior to World War II. I did not have the opportunity to travel to Greece until November 1998. As soon as I knew I would be in Athens, I attempted to contact the Jewish Museum of Greece. *Kol haKEHILA*, was the first internet source to give me a way to contact the museum by e-mail.

By e-mail, I asked the museum's curator, Zanet Battinou, to help find us a knowledgeable guide for our day in Athens. She recommended Dolly Asser. In addition to visiting ancient sites in Athens that day, Ms. Asser also took us to the Jewish Museum of Greece, and to the two modern synagogues in Athens.

ATHENS

We began our day at the Museum. It had recently relocated and now occupies an entire building in the Plaka neighborhood. The museum has a number of floors, each with a different focus. As a first-time visitor, I found it interesting to see historic artifacts, documents, clothing and a wide variety of religious and domestic objects. There is a research library on the top floor. School children arrived as we were leaving, so apparently a visit to the Jewish Museum of Greece has become a part of the public school curriculum.

After we left the museum, we visited the two synagogues. They are located on Melidoni Street, immediately across the street from one another. The street is gated and guarded by an armed policeman as a precaution against potential terrorist incidents.

We first went to the Beth Shalom synagogue, which is the only actively used synagogue for the 3,500 Jews in Athens today. Ms. Asser introduced us to Rabbi Jacob Arar, who studied in France and Israel, inasmuch as there are no rabbinical schools in Greece. The outside of the building has simple lines and is faced in white marble. The interior of the synagogue is mostly wood paneled and has a warm and comfortable feeling.

Directly across the street is the Ianniotiki synagogue, which had been built by Romaniote Jews from Ionnina. It is located on the second floor of the building. The lower floor houses the Athens Jewish community offices. We obtained the key to the synagogue from the office staff and walked through a hallway into a courtyard. The courtyard was fully paved except for a small area from which one large palm tree grew. We walked up the narrow exterior stairs to a walkway, and unlocked the door. This synagogue was smaller and seemed older than the synagogue across the street. We later learned that it is mostly used for special occasions. It is elegant in its simplicity.

RHODES

We had the opportunity to see one other Jewish site in Greece when we stopped in Rhodes a few days later. We had seen a website for the Jewish Museum of Rhodes before our travels began at www.RhodesJewishMuseum.org. We sought out the island's synagogue and adjacent museum. Finding the street in the old walled city of Rhodes was not too difficult, as it was clearly labeled and the synagogue is noted on tourist maps. As we walked toward the synagogue and museum, we knew that we were in what had once been the Jewish quarter of the city. We could see Hebrew inscriptions above some of the doorways, signifying houses built by prominent Jewish families. However, many of these buildings appeared to be in a state of disrepair. Unfortunately,

we had no information about the buildings and knew virtually nothing about the Jewish community that once existed here.

As we walked, we could see through iron gates, that some buildings had interior courtyards with interesting floor patterns formed by smooth black and white stones. In some courtyards, the stone patterns were intact, while in others the patterns were quite deteriorated.

We could not find the synagogue itself, but luckily, we asked directions from an elderly woman. Lucia Modiano Sulam turned out to be the keeper of the synagogue and was kind enough to guide us to it. She was a Holocaust survivor, with tattooed numbers on her forearm.

We were quite unprepared for what we found when we entered Kahal Shalom synagogue. The synagogue, in very good condition, was more elaborate than the synagogues we had seen in Athens. Crystal chandeliers hung from the ceiling. Beautiful carpets lay on the floor. The mosaic floor inside was made of the same black and white smooth stones that we had seen elsewhere. Here, the stones were arranged in more elaborate patterns. Chairs were placed on the two long sides of the interior and the wooden bimah was in the middle of the room.

Just outside the synagogue entrance is a courtyard which has a stone mosaic floor. It is well preserved.

We also visited the Jewish Museum of Rhodes, located next to the synagogue. This is a new museum in its first stage of development. Aron Hasson, a Los Angeles attorney whose family came from Rhodes, founded it. The museum currently consists of one room with white rustic walls and a curved ceiling. When we were there, the museum exhibition consisted of photographs and other printed materials.

TOURISM TO JEWISH SITES IN GREECE

We knew that the Jewish population in Greece had been decimated by the Holocaust, and that only remnants of that once-thriving community remains there. However, as a traveler and tourist, I have been stuck by the difficulty in obtaining information about Jewish sites and Jewish history of Greece. I do not understand why one organization or resource does not reference another. Organizations that have websites or access to the Internet should have hypertext links to other Greek Jewish organizations, including e-mail links to facilities that may not yet have a website.

There should be a list of bibliographic references about Greek Jewry and Jewish tourist sites in Greece. When we were in the Jewish Museum of Greece shop in Athens, I was stunned to find an English language book about the Jews of Ionnina (Dalven, R., *The Jews of Ioannina*, Philadelphia, 1992). I purchased the book immediately! Likewise, it was through word of mouth from both Yitzhak Kerem (publisher of the electronic newsletter *Sefarad*) and Elias Messinas (editor of *Kol haKEHILA*) that I learned of the fascinating book written by Dr. Michael Matsas entitled *The Illusion of Safety: The story of the Greek Jews During the Second World War* (New York, 1997). In reading these books and in speaking with both Messinas and Kerem whom I recently met in Jerusalem, I understand that the Greek Jews, unlike Jews in some other parts of Europe, had ample opportunity to flee or hide from the Nazis. In instance after instance the warnings of the catastrophic consequences of not fleeing or hiding were not disseminated, or the seriousness of the situation was minimized. The communication among the communities was poor.

When we visited Rhodes, we stood on its acropolis and clearly saw the Turkish coast

only 11 miles away. It was difficult to come to terms with the complacency of the Jewish population of Rhodes in 1944 that resulted in their slaughter. They were among the last Greek Jews to be sent to Auschwitz. By 1944, other communities in Greece had already been eliminated. Safety lay only eleven miles away. The Jews of the city of Rhodes did not even flee to the island's countryside. Perhaps a reader can explain this puzzling apparent fact.

The lesson today seems clear. To preserve the remnants of the Greek Jewish heritage, various interested organizations should cooperate with the another. They should use electronic hypertext links to cross-reference one another whenever possible. The Jewish Museum of Greece in Athens should have information about Jewish sites throughout Greece, including other museums, such as the one in Rhodes. Likewise, the Jewish Museum of Rhodes should link to as many Jewish sites throughout Greece as possible. Books, bibliographies and brochures about Jewish sites throughout Greece should be made available at each of the sites and at Tourist Offices. Never again should the Jewish community of Greece be weakened by poor communication among various components. Certainly, not in this age of electronic communications and the Internet. There are some dedicated people working in disparate organizations to preserve and memorialize Greek Jewish sites and culture. Now they need to recognize the gestalt effect that would result from closer cooperation.

We came away from our experience wanting to learn more about the various communities that only existed in the past, and also those which continue to survive. We hope that others will become interested in exploring and preserving Jewish heritage in Greece. The best way to do this and to attract Jewish tourists is to make information about Jewish sites more readily available. We hope that the various organizations and interested parties will work together to that end.●

IN RECOGNITION OF THE FOURTH BIRTHDAY OF THE PROVIDENCE GAY MEN'S CHORUS

● Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the Providence Gay Men's Chorus, which celebrated its fourth anniversary on November 14, 1999. I would like to thank the Chorus for its four years of community involvement, during which time the members have shared not only their melodious voices with the citizens of Rhode Island, but also their hopes and ambitions for a better world.

The Providence Gay Men's Chorus, which began in 1995 as a group of eight, now has 50 members. In addition to their musical talent, one of the attributes that is most unique about the Chorus, and most appreciated, is the group's mission to promote tolerance. As we know, the real work of fostering support for people with diverse backgrounds and lifestyles usually happens slowly, and within the context of shared activities and community. The Providence Gay Men's Chorus reaches out with its concerts to expand the bounds of community. By helping to create an atmosphere of tolerance and understanding, their work benefits not only the citizens of Rhode Island, but ultimately the entire nation.

I am pleased to make it known that November 14, 1999 was not only the fourth anniversary of the Chorus, but also was declared Providence Gay Men's Chorus Day in the State of Rhode Island. Mr. President, I ask that a gubernatorial proclamation from the Governor of my home state of Rhode Island proclaiming November 14th as "Providence Gay Men's Chorus Day" be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

I join in the chorus of voices supporting the Providence Gay Men's Chorus' dual mission of creating beautiful music and promoting mutual respect and understanding. I know this talented musical group will continue its good work and I wish them many, many more birthdays.

The proclamation follows:

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS—GUBERNATORIAL PROCLAMATION

Whereas, the Providence Gay Men's Chorus was first conceived in a karaoke bar in Providence in October 1995. The first meeting of its original eight members from Rhode Island and Massachusetts was held in November 1995, in a home in Pawtucket. The name Providence Gay Men's Chorus (PGMC) was decided on after some deliberation and the group was then underway with a music director and an accompanist; and,

Whereas, the mission of the PGMC is to provide and foster continuing growth of men's voices. Through the sharing of song concerts, the PGMC hopes to foster mutual understanding, tolerance and support of people with diverse backgrounds and lifestyles; and,

Whereas, the membership started to blossom during the first year and moved to St. James Episcopal Church in North Providence. During this year, the first board was also formed and the first concert was held in Warcham, Massachusetts with 12 members; and,

Whereas, the chorus kept growing and moved again. This time to the Bell Street Chapel in Providence, where the now 35-member chorus was performing two seasons per year with three concerts per season. It was at the Bell Street Chapel that the PGMC achieved their first sell out audience; and,

Whereas, as membership approached 40 members, the chorus moved once again to the First Unitarian Church in Providence. During this time, the PGMC joined the national choral organization for gay and lesbians called GALA and received its first corporate sponsorship; and,

Whereas, the chorus is now approaching its fourth birthday, has a membership of 50 and is back at the Bell Street Chapel. The members will be performing series of concerts in November, singing at First Night 2000, and initiating a scholarship program. Future plans for the chorus are to bring a program to the Hasbro's Children's Hospital, perform to mainstream audiences throughout the city and state, and attend the national GALA conferences; and,

Whereas, on November 14, 1999 the chorus will hold a concert at the Newport Congregational Church, under the direction of Charles Pietrello and the accompaniment of Bruce Ruby;

Now, therefore, I, Lincoln Almond, Governor of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, do hereby proclaim November 14, 1999, as Providence Gay Men's Chorus Day.●